

## SERMON VI.

## WHAT OUR WORK IS, AND HOW TO BE DONE.

*“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work,”* &c.—ECCLES. IX. 10.

SOME think that Solomon speaks these words in the person of an epicure; as if he should say, “Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we shall die.” But an epicure doth not use to speak so religiously. An epicure doth not mind the acceptance of God. But Solomon here saith, “Eat and drink with joy, for God accepteth thy works.” verse 7. An epicure doth not look upon this life, “and the days thereof as vanity,” which Solomon here doth (verse 9.) An epicure doth not look upon these outward things and blessings of this life, as the gift of God; Solomon here doth, verse 9. But in this Scripture, Solomon tells us, That a man should cheerfully take all the good that God doth put into his hand to have, verse 7, 8, 9. And that he should industriously do all that work which God hath put into his hand for to do, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do,” &c. verse 10. Where ye have an injunction, and the reason of that injunction. The injunction in these words, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do,” or is in the power of thy hand to do, as some translations have it, “do it with thy might.” The reason in these words, “For there is no work,” &c., that is, there is nothing in the grave which you can turn your hand unto; for the word  $\gamma$  is sometimes put for work, sometimes for device, sometimes for knowledge, and sometimes for wisdom. So that from these words you may observe thus much; that it is our duty to do that work with all our might, which is in the power of our hand to do. For the clearing whereof, we must first inquire what this phrase, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do,” or whatsoever is in the power of thine hand, doth import. Now if ye consult the Scripture, it implies, authority, ability, opportunity.

It implies authority or commission. That which falleth within the compass of our commission and authority, is, “in the power of our hand.” Upon this account Abraham said unto Sarah concerning her maid, Hagar, “Behold thy maid is in thine hand,” Gen. xvi. 6., that is, within the compass of

thine authority. *Illud vere possumus, quod jure possumus*; Though a man be able to do a work, yet if it be not lawful, or within the compass of his calling and commission; it is not in the power of his hand to do it.

As the words do imply authority, so they do imply an ability. For though a man have the power of authority to do a work, yet if he have not the power of ability to do it, it is not in the power of his hand to do it, "Knowest thou not, (said Laban to Jacob) that it is in the power of my hand to do thee hurt;" Gen. xxxi. 29, that is, knowest thou not that I have power and strength, and ability for to do thee hurt. But,

As the words do imply an ability, so they do imply opportunity and occasion; for though a man have both power of authority and of ability to do a work, yet if he have not opportunity to do it, that work is not in the power of his hand to do, "And let it be when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion shall serve." 1 Sam. x. 7. In the Hebrew, as your margin tells you, it is, "as thy hand shall find to do." And if ye look into Scripture, you shall find that a man is said to do that work which he doth occasion, though that work be done by another. It is said of Judas, "That he purchased a field with the reward of iniquity." Acts i. 18. "He brought the thirty pieces of silver to the priests, and threw them down in the temple, and departed," Matt. xxvii. 3, 5. If he threw them down in the temple, and left them with the priests, how did he purchase the field? Yes, says the interlineary gloss, *Possidit quia possideri fecit*, he purchased it, because he did that work which did administer the occasion of this purchase. Look therefore when a work is within the compass of our commission, and which we have ability and opportunity to do, then it is truly said to be in the power of our hand, and that is the work which our hand finds to do; so that whatever work that is, which God doth betrust us with, if we have ability and opportunity to do it, that we are to do with all our might.

Well, but then, when may a man be said to do this work of God with his might, or with all his might?

I answer, it imports several things, He that will do the work of God with all his might, must do it with all his soul in opposition unto heart-division. As in the New Testa-

ment, there is mention of *διψυχος ανηρ*, “ a double-minded man :” so in the Old Testament ye read of a divided heart, לב ולב, “ An heart and an heart.” And the word לב, heart is sometimes put for the affections, and sometimes for the conscience: yea, the Hebrew hath no other proper word for conscience, but the word heart. Therefore says the apostle, “ If thy heart condemn thee, (that is) if thy conscience condemn thee,” that is an Hebraism. Now the heart of the affection may run one way, and the heart of the conscience may go another way. The heart of Herod’s conscience went with John the Baptist, but the heart of his affection went with the dancing damsel. The heart of a drunkard’s conscience is to leave his drunkenness, but the heart of his affections is to his drunken company. But where a man doth the work of the Lord with all his might, he doth it with all his soul, in opposition unto heart-division.

And as he must do it with all his soul in opposition unto heart-division, so he must do the work of the Lord with all his understanding, in opposition unto unskilfulness. For, says Solomon, “ It is the property of a fool, not to know the way to the city,” Eccles. x. “ The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them; because he knows not how to go to the city,” that is, saith Luther, he wearieth out himself in difficult things and questions, when he doth not know that which is ordinary and necessary for him to know; “ he knows not the way to the city:” but as for the wise man, saith he, “ his heart is at his right hand,” verse 2. “ A wise man’s heart is at his right hand:” that is, he doth his work with dexterity, in opposition unto all unskilfulness.

And as he doth God’s work with dexterity, in opposition to all unskilfulness, so he doth it with all his affections, in opposition unto lukewarmness and remissness. For as the philosopher observes, All remissness doth arise from the mixture of some contrary: now where there is a mixture of the contrary, a man cannot do his work with all his might. But,

As he must do God’s work with all his affection, in opposition unto lukewarmness; so he must do it with all his ability, in opposition unto all reserves; Ananias and Sapphira did not do God’s work with all their might; why? because they had their reserves: but Moses did God’s work with

all his might, when he brought the people out of Egypt; why? because he left not an hoof behind him; he had no reserves. So now, when a man will not leave an hoof behind him, but doth God's work without all reserves; then he doth it with all his might. Yet.

As he must do it with all his ability, in opposition unto all reserves; so he must do it with his diligence and industry, in opposition unto sloth and negligence. "For he that is slothful in his business, is brother to the scatterer," saith Solomon. Do you therefore ask when a man may be said to do God's work with all his might? I answer it implies these things. He must do it with all his soul in opposition to all division of heart: with all his dexterity in opposition unto all unskilfulness: with all his affections, in opposition unto all lukewarmness and remissness: with all his ability, in opposition unto all reserves: and with all his industry and diligence, in opposition unto all sloth and negligence.

Well, but then, why and upon what account or reason must we do God's work with all our might?

I answer. It is God's will we should do so; it is his commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. iv. 5, 6. Here are three alls; "All thy soul, all thy heart, and all thy might." And lest you should think that there may be some abatement in New Testament times, ye shall find that when Christ cites those words he adds a fourth all. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind," Luke x. 27. Here are four alls. There is no abatement then in our gospel times. Now if this be the mind and will of God, is not this reason enough for us? I have read of one bishop in the primitive times, whose name was *Quodvulteus*, that is, *Quod vult Deus*, What God will. And indeed methinks that this should be the name of every christian, *Quodvulteus*, what God will. We all profess ourselves the children of Abraham: he went blindfold into God's commandments, and subscribed to a blank. Now we have commandment for this both in the Old and New Testament. It is scriptural.

As it is scriptural, so it is a rational thing that we should do God's work with all our might. For is it not a reasonable thing that we should give God his due, his own?

Now all our might is God's due. *Non est devotionis*, says Prosper. It is not matter of devotion to give all unto God within a little; *sed fraudis est*, it is matter of fraud to keep a little from God.

And is it not a reasonable thing for us to love God, "who hath loved us, and given himself for us and to us;" who is the proper object of our love, "and altogether lovely;" who only gives the affection of love, and the thing loved; and who only can recompence your love with love again? Now it is the only measure of true love to know no measure. *Non amat, qui non zelat*.

And is it not a reasonable thing that we should do God's work as fully as our own? Now if you have any business to do in the world, you will turn every stone, you will do it with all your might. Have you not sinned with all your might; and shall your sins be crying sins, and your prayers whispering prayers? Will you run when the world calls, and will you creep when God calls? You will not bear it that a man speak to you when you speak to another; and will you bear it, that the world should speak to you while you speak to God. But,

Is it not a reasonable thing that we should do that work with all our might which is our only work, and the work which we came into the world for? Now we did not come into the world to get riches or credit. We have nothing here to do but to serve the Lord; all other things are subordinate to that. And if you look into Scripture, you shall find that the Lord only stands upon this work. "Thou shalt worship the Lord, and him only shalt thou serve; only let your conversation be as becometh," &c. Here doth the *only* stand. Yea, says Solomon, this is the whole of man, Eccles. xii. 13, "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man." The word *duty* is not in the original; but "fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man." Now is it not rational that we should give God his due? That we should love God; that we should do his work as fully as our own; that we should do that work with all our might, which is our only work. Surely therefore it is very rational that we should do God's work with all our might. Yet

As it is rational that we should do thus, so it is a dangerous

thing not to do it; "For cursed is every one that doth the work of the Lord negligently." Sloth and the curse grow together upon one stalk. The Jewish Rabbins do observe, that there is a three-fold *Amen* that is not right, which, say they, is followed with a three-fold answerable punishment. There is *Amen amputatum*, *Amen acceleratum*, and *Amen pupillare*, or *Orban amen*. *Amputatum amen*, when a man doth cut short his duty, and say, *Amen*, unto half duty: *amen acceleratam*, is when he doth huddle over his duty and say, *Amen*, to an hastened duty: *amen pupillare*, as when a man doth perform his duty without understanding and heart, and doth say, *Amen*, to he knows not what. Now say they, If a man shall cut short his duty, God shall cut short his comforts; if a man shall hasten and huddle over his duty, God will hasten and not prolong his days; and if a man shall perform his duty without heart and understanding, then his children shall be orphans; as his duty was without heart and knowledge, so his children shall be without parents. Thus they express the punishment of doing God's work negligently; but ye know what the prophet Malachi saith, "Cursed is every one that hath in his flock a male, and offers a corrupt thing to God;" as if he should say, Cursed is that man or woman who hath masculine affections for the world, and female affections for the work of God. Oh, now if it be the will and mind of God that we should do his work with all our might, and a rational thing to do so, and a dangerous thing not to do it, then surely it is our duty and matter of great concernment to do the work that God hath given us to do with all our might.

Why, but will some say, this seems contrary to Scripture, reason, and our own judgment: to Scripture, for the Scripture saith, "Use the world as if you used it not; to reason, for the magistrate is to do justice, and if he do it with all his might, there will be *summum jus*, and *summum jus* is *summa injuria*; and to our own judgment, for according to our own principles we are able to do nothing, but according to this text and doctrine, there is something "in the power of our hand to do." How can this therefore agree either with Scripture, reason, or our own judgment and principles?

Yes, very well, for doth the scripture say that we are to use the world as if we used it not; and doth it say here,

“whatever is in the power of thine hand to do, do it with all thy might?” Then put these together, and what is the result but this, that we should use all our skill and might, “to use the world as if we used it not.” And as for the reason about the magistrate, though the magistrate is to do justice, yet he is to shew mercy also; if he have righteousness in the one hand, he is to have mercy in the other; “I will sing of mercy and judgment,” saith David; Seneca tells us, that many punishments are as much disparagement to the magistrate, as many funerals are to the physican. Ye know that Moses was the first magistrate that Israel had, and did not he do justice? Yes, yet he was the meekest man upon earth. Why so? But to shew that the dispensations of justice will grow very well upon the disposition of meekness. And as for our own principles and judgment, who doth not say, and say true, That every man hath power to do more than he doth; and what if I should say with some, That God will condemn no man for that sin which he hath not a power to avoid? The heathens ye know are judged by the law of nature, but though they are not able to keep the whole law of nature, yet they are able to avoid these sins against nature for which they are condemned; so under the gospel, though a man be not able to convert and turn unto God, and keep the whole law of the gospel, yet he may be able to avoid the sins against the gospel, as positive unbelief and resistance, for which he shall be condemned; thus some. But I need not say thus, neither shall I need to enter into this debate here, for whoever liveth under the gospel is either godly or ungodly; if he be ungodly, he hath power to do more than he doth; and if he be godly, his will is freed; for “whom the Son makes free, he is free indeed,” though his will be not *libera*, free, yet his will is *liberata*, freed; as Austin speaks. So that thus now you see there is nothing in this truth that is contrary to Scripture, reason, or our own principles; yet give me leave to bound it with these cautions,

Though you must do God’s work with all your might, yet “your moderation must be known unto all men;” some will not let God’s work pass through their hands, but they will have some toll for their own interest. Joshua did not so, he conquered the land of Canaan, and when he came to divide it, what a little thong did he cut out of that leather

for himself and family; some will not do God's work, but they will carry it on with their own passion. It is said of Scanderbeg, that great soldier, that when he spake sometimes of Christ, he would be so earnest that the blood would spirt out of his lips: but as God's grace hath no need of our sin, so his work hath no need of our passions; though therefore you do the work of the Lord with all your might, yet you are to manage it with mildness and sweetness, therein also your moderation is to be known to all.

Though you do the work of your hand with all your might, yet you must not look upon the success of your work as the fruit of your hand, but of God's hand; when Israel went out against Amalek, Moses lifted up his hands, and Israel prevailed; then Joshua built an altar, and called it *Jehova-nissi*; for, says the text, Exod. xvii. 15, "The Lord hath sworn that he will have war with Amalek;" but, verse 16, in the Hebrew, as the margin tells, it is the hand on the throne of the Lord; and why, says Glassius, is it said, the hand on the throne of the Lord, but to shew that this victory was not from Moses' hand, though it was a praying hand, but from God's hand. Luther tells us of Staupitius, that when he came to his government, he said, I will govern according to law; but when he saw that his government did not succeed, then he said, I will govern according to the customs of the place; when he saw that succeeded not, then said he, I will govern by the Scripture; when he saw that succeeded not well, then said he, I will do what I can according to Scripture and law, and leave the success unto God; and then his government prospered. And you see how it is with a child, a father bids him do this or that which he knows he cannot do; therefore he secretly puts his own hand to the work, and he praises his child, and the child thinks that his hand did it. So here, God bids us do his work with all our might, and we do so, and have success in the work, and we think the success is the fruit of our hand, whereas in truth it is the fruit of our Father's hand. Mark therefore what follows in the next words to the text; in this verse, saith Solomon, "Whatever thou findest in thy hand to do, do it with all thy might;" but in the next verse he says, "I returned and saw, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." Why doth he add these words imme-

diately, but to shew thus much, that though we do God's work with all our might, yet we must not look upon the success as the fruit of our own hand. And thus now this doc- is cleared, proved, vindicated, and cautioned; and so I come to the application.

Now, by way of application, methinks this doctrine looks wishly upon all the congregation, for what man or woman is there amongst you, whom God hath not betruſted with ſome work or other? It is true, indeed, that he who had but one talent, wrapped it up in the napkin. Thoſe are moſt apt to be idle that have leaſt, yet every one hath ſome talent or other, ſome work or other, that every one hath in the power of his hand. Now, therefore, in the name of the Lord, I ſay unto you all, "Whatever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

But how ſhall I be able to do the work which God hath put into my hand with all my might?

I answer, you muſt know what that work is which is in the power of your hand, elſe you cannot turn your hand to do it with all your might. Now,

Look what that work is which is *opus diei*, the work of the day, which can neither be done in heaven nor hell; that is now in the power of your hand to do. There is ſome work which we may do in this life, that can neither be done in heaven nor hell. Preaching and hearing the word cannot be done in heaven nor hell; repentance cannot be done in heaven nor hell; patience under affliction cannot be done in heaven nor hell; contributing to or helping the poor cannot be done in heaven nor hell. Now look what that work is that can neither be done in heaven nor hell, that is the work of your preſent day, and is in the power of your hand to do.

Look what that work is which is the work of your place, calling, or relation, that is the work which is in the power of your hand to do. As ſuppoſe you be a magiſtrate, it is the work of the chriſtian magiſtrate to ſafe-guard and defend religion: "Be wiſe now, therefore, O ye princes and nobles, kiſs the Son," Psalm ii. 1. It is the work of the magiſtrate to preſerve the public peace, for he is the head of the community, and therefore muſt look to the welfare of the body. It is the work of the magiſtrate to diſpenſe juſtice and righteouſneſs, ſo as to encourage the good and be a terror to evil

doers. Rom. xiii. It is the work of the magistrate to assist the minister. By the hand of Moses and Aaron, God led his people of old; not by the hand of Moses alone, nor by the hand of Aaron alone, but by the hand of Moses and Aaron. It is the work of the magistrate to see that the poor be relieved and provided for. Psalm lxxii. Or suppose you be a minister, it is the work of the minister to walk before the people, as the *dux gregis*, before the rest of the flock, in all holy life and godly conversation. Conversation is continual preaching. It is the work of the minister to study the Scriptures much, for he hath more help that way than others. It is the work of the minister to preach the word plainly, powerfully and continually, both for conviction, conversion and edification. It is the work of the minister to separate between the precious and the vile in church administrations. It is the work of the minister to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort the afflicted, to visit and pray over the sick: "Is any one sick, let him call for the elders of the church," James v. 15. Or suppose you be the governor of a family, father or master, or you be governed, a child or servant; it is the work of the governor to bring up his children or servants in the nurture and education of the Lord. It is the word of inferiors to be obedient to their parents or master. It is the work of children and those that are young to learn some trade and calling, that they may live like men and women another day, and do good to others. It is the work of those that are young to stock and store themselves with principles of religion. Luther, a great doctor in the church, professed that he was yet, *catechismi discipulus*. And what is the reason, saith Calvin, that men fall into errors when they are men, but because they did not learn the principles of religion when they were young? Or suppose you be one of this town or of these congregations, it is your work to pray for them that are over you in the Lord; it is your work to attend on the means of grace, to receive the gospel, and to improve your gospel opportunities. Have ye forgotten, O ye people of Yarmouth, how far ye would run and go formerly for a dishful of water; and now a spring and fountain of grace is opened amongst you, will ye not improve it? If a mine of gold or silver be opened in a country, will they not dig it out? Now through grace, there is a mine of gospel treasures opened amongst

you, and will ye not dig for it as for hidden treasure? This is your work; for look what that work is which is the work of your calling, place and relation, that is the work that is in the power of your hand to do.

Look what that work is, which is directly contrary to that sin wherein you have notoriously lived, or been guilty of; that is the work which God calls you to, and is in the power of your hand. I have read of a young man that was much given to scorning, jeering and despising of his mother; but after it pleased God to work savingly upon his heart, whenever he saw his mother come into the room, he would fall down upon his knees. I commend not his discretion. But if ye look into the New Testament, ye shall meet with three great converts, Zaccheus, the jailor, and Paul; and what did they do, but that work which was directly contrary to the sin which they were notoriously guilty of and given to? Zaccheus had been an oppressor, but being converted, "Behold, Lord, (said he,) the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man I restore fourfold." The jailor whipped the apostles, and put them into the stocks in the inner prison; but when converted, then he brought them into his house, washed their stripes, and set meat before them. Paul was notorious for blaspheming, and persecuted the church; but when converted, then he preached the gospel, which before he persecuted. So that look what that work is, which is directly contrary to your notorious sin; that is the work that God calls you to, and which your hand should find to do.

Look what that work is which you are spared or raised up for, either from poverty or sickness; that is the work which is in the power of your hand now to do. There is a great controversy at this day, how God's pre-determination, and the liberty of man's will, can consist or stand together; the reconciliation whereof was committed to Francis de Arriva, which he shunning, fell into a great sickness, so dangerous, that the physicians gave him over for a dead man: but all of a sudden, in a day's time he revived, and was so well, that the physicians could not believe that he was well; but he recovering, thought that he was spared on purpose to undertake that work of reconciliation: which thereupon he did, and hath said as much in it as any other. And you know what

Mordecai said to Esther, "Who knows but God raised thee up on purpose," &c. Look therefore what that work is, which your former poverty or sickness points at, and for which you are thus raised up; that is the work that is in the power of your hand to do. Yea,

Look what that work is, that you have special ability and opportunity to do above others, that is the work that is in the power of your hand to do. As suppose you have a great estate in the world, and have no children, it is your work to relieve and help the poor. Therefore, says Solomon, "Thou shalt not withhold goods from the owners thereof, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it," Prov. iii. 27. Would ye, therefore, know what that work is, which is in the power of your hand? I answer in these several things. Look what that work is which is the work of your present day, which cannot be done in heaven nor hell; what work that is, that is the work of your place or relation; what work that is, that is directly opposite to your notorious sin; what work that is, which you are spared and raised up for; and what work that is, which you have an ability and opportunity to do above others. That and all these are the works which are in the power of your hand to do.

But, if you would do God's work with all your might, then you must observe where your true strength lies, and apply yourself thereunto. Now your strength lies in Christ, "the Lord our righteousness and our strength." Under Christ your strength lies in your call to your work. "Go in this thy might," said the Lord to Gideon, when he gave him a call. Under Christ your strength lies in the promise, for *lex jubet, gratia juvat*; the law commands, and the promise helps. Under Christ your strength lies in your comfort: he works faintly, that doth work uncomfortably. "The joy of the Lord is our strength." It is true in this sense; and under Christ your strength lies in dependance upon God for strength. Our strength is to sit still; that is, to depend and wait on God for his strength. Herein lies your true strength. Would you, therefore, do God's work with all your might, then away to your true strength.

And, if you would do God's work with all your might, then take heed that you do not think the way to heaven is easy, nor that any thing is small that lies between God and

you. *Difficultas acuit conatum* ; Difficulty sharpens diligence. But if a man thinks a thing is easy, he will not put his full strength and might to the work. Gregory de Valentia tells of a merchant, that professed he would be a papist, and no protestant ; for said he, If I be a papist, my work is short and easy ; it is but believe as the church believes : but if I be a Lutheran, then I must learn catechisms, and search the Scriptures, but I have no time for that ; therefore I will be a papist, for that way is easy. But we know that the way to heaven is up hill. *Nulla virtus sine lapide*. " Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life." And the more ye see these difficulties of your salvation, the more you will put your whole strength to it, and will work with all your might.

Yet if you would do God's work with all your might, then let your eye be much upon them that have done God's work fully in their day. If you be a magistrate, think on Moses ; if a minister, think on Paul ; if a private person, think on Caleb. It is recorded of Luther, that he did ordinarily spend three hours every day in prayer ; he preached much, read lectures, and wrote nine or ten great volumes in folio. It is recorded of Calvin, that he preached yearly two hundred and eighty sermons, and read one hundred and eighty lectures ; every lecture being the length of a sermon. Once in a week he met with the elders of the church. Much in private duty and wrote letters to all the churches. So that the care of all the churches lay upon him ; and wrote twelve great volumes in folio. Ye have seen the three volumes of Mr. Perkins in folio, all which he wrote with his left hand, for his right hand was naturally lame : his motto was, *Hoc age* ; as if he had said, What thou doest, do with thy might. Dr. Sibbs his emblem, was a candle burning with these words over it, *Per lucendo pereo* ; By giving light to others I consume myself. And ye have heard of that good old man Mr. Dod, who went up and down doing good, and preaching all the day long : when his friends observed that he was spent, and desired him to spare himself, his usual saying was, Hear this one thing more, it may be I shall never speak to you again ; and so he went on and continued till he was eighty six ; and so died in his full strength of goodness. Now when I consider these men, I confess before you all, that I am ashamed

And if men would but seriously consider these and such like examples of men that have done much for God in their day; they would certainly be provoked to do God's work with all their might.

Yet if you would do God's work with all your might; then converse much with the greatness of God. Who can stand in the beams of the sun, and not shine with the beams thereof? Much less shall you stand in the beams of God's attributes, and not shine therewith. The sight of God's greatness will *grandire*, greaten your hearts and spirits, and make them do much and great things for God. Therefore converse much with the greatness of God. But,

Be sure that you lay in against reproaches. For when you ride apace, the dogs will bark, and the dust will be raised: if you go easily, you raise no dust, neither will the dogs bark. So if you will go a slow pace to heaven, you shall not be reviled, or reproached by the world: but if you will not put on with all your might, then you shall be reproached. Therefore if you will do God's work with all your might, you must be well laid in against all reproaches, because it is the work of your hand.

Again if you would do it with all your might, then you must go to God to open your hand; and when he shall open your hand, and breathe upon your soul, be sure that you improve all those gales. For Job tells us, "That he sealeth up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work." Sometimes he seals up the hand of the seamen, that they cannot sail; sometimes he sealeth up the hand of the husbandmen, that they cannot sow nor reap: sometimes he sealeth up the hand of the merchant and tradesman, that he cannot vend his commodity; sometimes the hand of the preacher, that he cannot preach; sometimes the hand of the christian, that he cannot pray. And why doth he thus seal up the hand of every man, but that all may know his work? Would ye therefore do the work of your hand with all your might, then go to God to open and unseal your hand; and if he breathe upon your heart, then be sure that you improve these gales.

Do ye therefore now ask, What shall I do, that I may do the work of God with all my might. Then remember these several things.

You must know what that work is which is in the power of your hand.

You must observe where your true strength lies, and apply yourself thereto.

You must not think the way to heaven easy, or any thing small that is between God and you.

You must eye them much who have served God fully in their day.

You must converse much with the greatness of God.

You must be well laid in against all reproaches.

And then you must go to God to open and unseal your hand, improving all his gales. Now give me leave to lay some three or four motives before you that may persuade hereunto, and I shall wind up all.

The first motive is this, Look whatever work that is which is in the power of your hand to do, that God will require at your hand. If you be a magistrate, and it be your work to preserve peace, to suppress the multitude of ale-houses, and profanation of the Lord's day, then God will require this at your hand. If you be a minister, and it be your work to "preach the gospel in season and out of season;" then God will require this work at your hand. If you be a parent, and it be your work to bring up your children in the nurture and education of the Lord; if you be a child or young person, and it be your work to stock yourself with principles of religion; then God will require these works at your hands. And if you be one of this town, and of this congregation, and it be your work to receive the gospel, and to improve your day of grace; then God will require this work at your hand. Remember the parable of the talents, &c. If God will require the work of our hands at our hands; why shall we not do that work with all our might? But

As God will call you to an account for all that work which is in the power of your hand: so you do not know how soon he may take your work out of your hands; how soon he may take you from your work, or your work from you. We ordinarily think that we shall not die before our work be done: but if you look wishly upon God's dispensations, you shall find that death doth sometimes press men from their shop-board, when much work is cut out before them. You all know what an useful man good king Josiah was as a magistrate, yet he died in the midst of his work, when he was but thirty-nine years old. Ye know what an useful man

John the Baptist was ; yet he died in the midst of his days, when not above thirty three years old. Is it not known to some what a great workman Dr. Whitaker was here in England, of whom it was said, That he never was less idle, than when idle ; yet he died in the midst of his work when he was but forty-four years old. It is ordinarily known what a blessed instrument Mr. Perkins was, of whom the preacher said at his funeral, Here lies that blessed Perkins, who first taught England for to worship God : yet he died in the midst of his work, when he was but forty-seven years old. And who hath not heard of Dr. Preston, what a great workman he was in God's vineyard, of whom I may say, Who though dead, yet speaketh, in his precious books that are amongst you ; yet he died in the midst of his work when he was but forty-one years old. I might instance in Mr. Burroughs, and others ; yea, in divers good christians in this place, who have died in the midst of their work and time. It was not long since a preacher now in heaven preached on this text at the Guild at Norwich at the installment of the mayor ; and before the year came about, the mayor died. So that death doth sometimes press us from our shop-board before our work be made up. And I pray mind the text a little, " Whatever is in the power of thine hand to do, do it with all thy might : " for, says Solomon, " In the grave there is no work nor device, whither thou goest. " He doth not say, whither thou shalt go, or whither thou must go, but " whither thou goest. " You go sometimes to church, and sometimes not ; you go sometimes to sea, and sometimes not ; you go sometimes into the country, and sometimes not : but whether you go to the church, or whether you go to sea, or whether you go into the country, still thou goest to the grave. And ye know what Christ saith, " The night cometh wherein no man worketh. " Now if the night cometh, and thou goest ; then why should you not do your work with all your might whilst it is day. Certainly he that plays away his day shall go to bed in the dark.

Who is there in all this congregation, that doth not desire a comfortable death-bed when it comes. As the heathen man said to a great congregation, I know all your thoughts ; for every man desires to buy cheap, and to sell dear ; so in

this respect, I may say, I know all your thoughts, viz., that when death comes, you may have a comfortable death-bed. In the time of your death-bed sickness, you will then be able to do little ; when your pains shall be great, you will be able to pray little, to hear little, to read or meditate little, and then what will be your comfort in that death-bed-little but this? Well, though I can do but little now, yet I have prayed and served God with all my might when I was well, and therefore I have comfort now. Now therefore if you desire that you may have much comfort in your death-bed-little, why should you not do the present work of your hand with all your might? But,

In the last place, Who is there in all this congregation that doth not desire to rejoice with all his heart in these blessings which he hath in his hand ; now look once more upon the words of the text, and ye shall find, that as Solomon in God's name commands you "to rejoice with all your heart in the blessings which you have," ver. 7—9, so in these words he commands you to do God's work with all your might. And why are these things thus knit together, but to teach us thus much, that whoever will do with all his might the work that is in his hand to do, he may and shall rejoice with all his heart in the blessings which he hath in his hand to enjoy? But above all ye know how fully Christ did your work for you, and will you do his work by halves? Never speak of rest here, there is rest enough in the grave, and recompence enough in heaven. Either the work that is in your hand is worth your while, or it is not ; if it be not worth your while, why should you do it at all ; and if it be worth your while, why should you not do it with all your might? And oh, that there were an heart in you all to do so. If the weight of this truth have fallen in power upon your souls, I dare say, some of you will go away and say, What have I done all this while? I confess I have done God's work by the bye, and when I heard ministers pressing such truths as these, I have said, Well, yet I hope I may go to heaven with less ado, but now through grace I will go away, and whatever is in the power of my hand to do, I will do it with all my might. Thus do, and I shall obtain the end of my preaching, and you, under Christ, shall obtain the end of your

practice, the salvation of your souls. Wherefore think on all these things and the Lord bless them to you.

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## SERMON VII.

### SOUL-RESIGNATION INTO THE HANDS OF GOD.

*“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,”* LUKE xxiii. 46.

THESE are the last words of Christ on the cross, the seventh speech; and of all others the most exemplary for us. “Into thy hands,” that is, into thy charge, care, and tuition. God hath no hands at all, for he is a Spirit; but by his hands we are to understand his keeping, charge, and custody. Numb. xxxiii. 1, it is said, “The children of Israel went forth out of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron;” that is, under the charge of Moses and Aaron; so the translators do interpret it. For whereas, chap. xxxi. 49, it is said by the officers of the army, “Thy servants have taken the sum of the men that were under our charge;” the margin tells you that in the Hebrew it is, “under our hand.” So Ps. xci. 11, 12, “He shall give his angels charge over thee, and they shall bear thee up in their hands.” By the hands of God therefore, understand his keeping and tuition; Father, into thy keeping and tuition I do commend my spirit; the word is, *παραδωσομαι*, I will commend; but our Saviour follows the Septuagint, and the Septuagint the Hebrew of Ps. xxxi., whence these words are taken. And it is ordinary with the Hebrew to put the future for the present time. I will, or I do commend my spirit, that is, my soul, myself, but especially my soul; the thing commended was his soul; the person to whom he did commend his soul, was his Father; the time when he commended his soul, was at the instant of his death, for having said so, he gave up the ghost. Now if ye ask why Christ did at this time especially commend and resign himself and soul up to God? I answer, For these reasons.

Thereby he testified that he had not lost his confidence in God as a Father; in the former words he had cried out and said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”